

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

*****news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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UNITED STATES ESTABLISHED RECORD USE OF FISHERY PRODUCTS IN 1963

Use of fishery products in the United States reached a record of 10.5 billion pounds in 1963, surpassing the previous high of 9.9 billion pounds established in 1962, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced today.

Preliminary figures from Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries show that the Nation last year used about 6 billion pounds of fish for industrial products and about 4.5 billion pounds for human food.

For the first time in history, imports accounted for more than half the fisheries products used in the United States. Domestic fisherman provided only about 44 percent of the total, compared to 53 percent in 1962. The dollar value of the domestic catch, however, was the second highest on record.

The domestic catch of 4.6 billion pounds last year provided almost 55 percent of the edible fish, but only about 36 percent of the inedible supply used in the United States.

Despite a drop in the domestic catch of 600 million pounds, and a decrease in value of \$9 million, it remained the second best year for United States fishermen in value. The record of \$397 million was reached in 1962.

Most of the decline in the United States catch last year resulted from a drop of 524 million pounds in landings of menhaden, a species used in the production of fish meal and oils.

Other significant reductions in catch were: salmon, down 35 million pounds; whiting, 24 million; ocean perch, 16 million; Pacific mackerel, 12 million; haddock, 11 million; Maine herring and blue crabs, 10 million each; and Pacific sardines, 9 million.

The United States maintained fifth place among the world's fishing nations, with approximately 6 percent of the world catch. The first four Nations, in order, were: Japan, Peru, Communist China, and the Soviet Union.

Increased use of fish in the United States last year resulted from a gain of more than 760 million pounds for industrial products, mostly fish meal. At the same time, the consumption of edible fish dropped about one-third pound per capita. Among factors believed responsible were plentiful supplies of poultry and beef.

There were several bright spots for United States commercial fishermen. The shrimp catch was up 48 million pounds; 24 million more pounds of king crabs were harvested; and the catch of yellowtail flounder increased 18 million pounds.

Following is a review of last year's commercial fishing activity by region:

New England and North Atlantic--There was a large increase in catch of North Atlantic tuna, but the catch of groundfish, such as cod, haddock and ocean perch, was down because of the lack of availability. Herring was down because of low demand. Most of the sharply increased yellowtail flounder catch was landed at New Bedford, Mass. The catch of tuna in the North Atlantic was a record-breaking 18 million pounds.

Middle Atlantic--Menhaden dropped sharply to only 212 million pounds, about 100 million pounds less than in 1962.

Chesapeake Bay--There was a sharp decline in crabs and menhaden. Croaker and oysters also were down.

South Atlantic--The poorest shrimp harvest in years was experienced, but a record was established in the catch of blue crabs. The menhaden catch showed a strong rise.

Gulf of Mexico--Oyster production set a new record. The shrimp catch was the best since 1955. Menhaden and blue crabs were down slightly.

Pacific Coast and Hawaii--There were good catches of albacore tuna, but yellowfin was off, with virtually no change in total volume of tuna taken. Sardines again failed to appear in volume off southern California. In Washington, a large pink salmon run brought the total salmon catch to nearly 54 million pounds, compared to 22 million pounds in 1962. The catch of Dungeness crabs was less than normal.

Alaska--King crab production set a record. Salmon was down due to smaller runs. The halibut catch was off because of reduced availability. The Dungeness crab catch was up nearly 3 million pounds.

Copies of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries "Advance Report on Fisheries of the U. S. for 1963" are available without charge from the Office of Information, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D. C., 20240.

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